

DATA DIVE WITH NIK NANOS

COMING INTO CONFLICT

A survey shows most Canadians worry that there will be an increase in hate-motivated incidents in our communities resulting from the Israel-Hamas war

OPINION

Nik Nanos is the chief data scientist at Nanos Research, research adjunct professor at the Norman Paterson School for International Affairs at Carleton University, a global fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, and the official pollster for The Globe and Mail and CTV News.

The war between Israel and Hamas is a major issue in Canada. The conflict has created tension across the country that is being felt in our communities. Politicians are feeling the pressure to say the “right” thing – and the right thing depends on how you feel about the war.

Canadians are worried. A new survey for CTV News by Nanos shows that seven in 10 Canadians are concerned (39 per cent) or somewhat concerned (30 per cent) that there will be an increase in hate-motivated incidents in our communities resulting from the conflict in the Middle East. Different generations of respondents are of one mind and consistent in their worry.

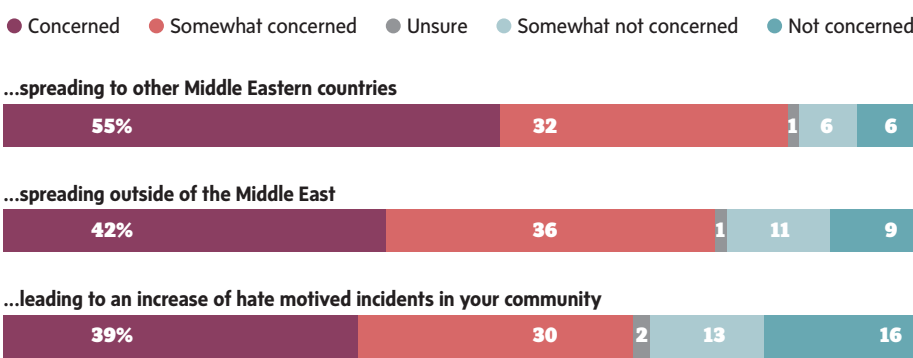
Not many Canadians believe that the conflict will be contained. Almost nine in 10 people are concerned (55 per cent) or somewhat concerned (32 per cent) that the conflict will spread to other Middle Eastern countries. A significant number are concerned (42 per cent) or somewhat concerned (36 per cent) that the conflict will spread outside of the Middle East. Of note: Canadians over 55 years of age are noticeably more likely to be concerned about an expansion of the conflict compared with individuals under 35 years of age.

What should Canada do in response? A survey conducted by Nanos for The Globe and Mail shows that six in 10 people (59 per cent) say the Liberal government should provide humanitarian aid to the region; 16 per cent believe Canadian troops should participate in a potential peacekeeping mission in the future; and 8 per cent say the country should accept refugees. The rest say doing nothing is the best course of action (13 per cent), or they are unsure what should be done.

On Israel’s use of military force

Canadians on the Israel-Hamas conflict

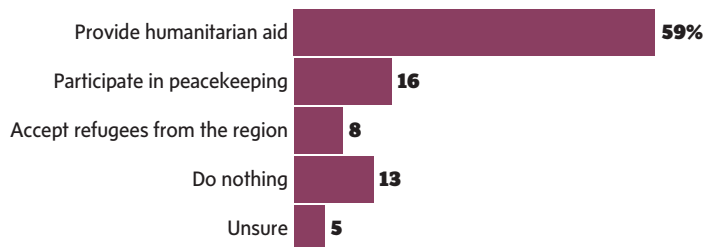
CONCERNS ABOUT THE CONFLICT...



Note: Numbers may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

ON CANADA’S ROLE

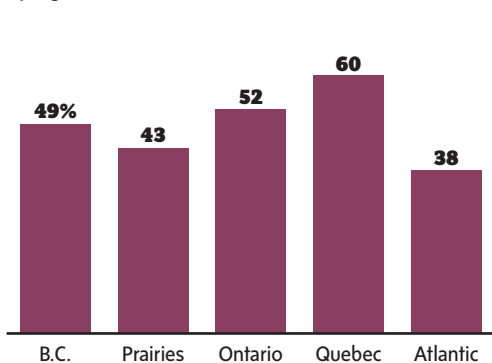
Support for potential actions by the Canadian government as a response to the conflict



ON WAR AND PEACE

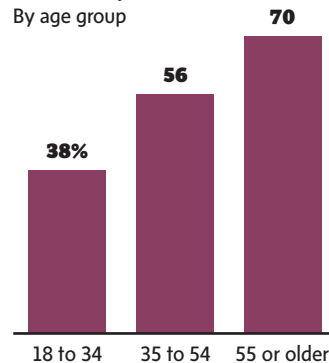
Canadians who say it’s a “good” or “very good” time to negotiate a two-state solution

By region



Canadians who say Israel’s use of its military force is “justified” or “somewhat justified”

By age group



MURAT YÜKSELİR / THE GLOBE AND MAIL, SOURCE: NANOS RESEARCH

to remove Hamas from Gaza, a majority of Canadians either believe it is justified (30 per cent) or somewhat justified (27 per cent) compared with those who do not believe the action was justified

(18 per cent not justified, 12 per cent somewhat not justified). There is, however, a major generational division. People over 35 years of age believe that Israel is justified in using force against

Hamas while Canadians under 35 years of age oppose the Israeli use of force (46 per cent not justified/somewhat not justified, versus 38 per cent justified/somewhat justified).

When it comes to the question of a possible two-state solution, opinions are not firm. Although the slimmest of majorities think it is a very good (27 per cent) or good time (24 per cent) to negotiate a two-state solution that gives Palestinians their own state, differences of opinion are more likely to occur based on region rather than age. Quebeckers were the most likely to think it was a good time for a two-state solution (60 per cent); those living in Atlantic Canada the least (38 per cent).

As casualties continue to mount in the war, we should expect a rough ride on a number of fronts. We should also clearly understand what Canada can and cannot do.

First, a peaceful solution in the Middle East has been elusive for generations and Canada is neither a superpower nor a key player to lead on that front. At best, we can support a local solution agreed to between Israel, the Palestinians and other key Middle Eastern powers if that ever comes to be.

Second, Canadians are much more likely to support providing humanitarian aid over peacekeeping or accepting refugees from the region.

Third, we should not underestimate the impact of how we respond to managing the conflict at home. If the authorities do not charge and prosecute those responsible for violent hate crimes or incitement of violence, we unravel safety in our communities and effectively give licence to more hatred and conflict. The lesson of the Israel-Hamas war is that our mostly peaceful corner of the world is not immune from importing international conflicts and that the risks of escalation to violence are larger now than in the past.

Our elected leaders now have to step up and stand up for the country we aspire to be both in terms of our domestic and international responses to this conflict. Not responding, whether it be to hate crimes at home or not providing humanitarian aid, is both a domestic and international risk. We cannot expect to have the moral high ground if we do not fight at home those same forces of racism and hate that are tearing the Middle East apart.

We should listen to renowned scientist’s warning about climate change

THOMAS HOMER-DIXON

OPINION

Executive director of the Cascade Institute at Royal Roads University and professor emeritus at the University of Waterloo

Human beings have a natural optimism bias. For most of our species’ history, this bias has served us well, helping us persevere in the face of overwhelming odds. But when it comes to the climate crisis, our natural optimism could be our undoing. Our collective response to the crisis has been marked by denial, delay and delusion – denial of the problem’s seriousness, delay in doing anything significant about it and delusion about the efficacy of those things we’ve finally gotten around to doing.

One person who has railed against these tendencies is the renowned climate scientist James Hansen. Throughout his long career, Dr. Hansen has developed a reputation for being consistently ahead of the scientific curve in his assessment of climate change and its implications, most famously in the summer of 1988 when, as director of the NASA Goddard Institute, he brought public attention to global warming in testimony to the United States Senate. Now retired from NASA and based at Columbia University, he’s still vigorously engaged in climate science and policy advocacy.

In recent years, Dr. Hansen has argued that the scientific consensus, as reflected in the voluminous reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), greatly underestimates the rate and magnitude of future warming. Earlier this month, he and 17 colleagues forcefully

stated their case in a peer-reviewed paper, *Global Warming in the Pipeline*, published by a University of Oxford journal. I’d rank it as the most important scientific article I’ve read in the past decade.

If Dr. Hansen and his colleagues are right, the received wisdom of today’s supposedly informed climate cognoscenti – people such as David Wallace-Wells of *The New York Times* – is substantially wrong. Mr. Wallace-Wells and others tell us, with evident relief, that warming will likely peak somewhere around 2 to 3 C. The rapid decline in the cost of wind and solar power means we won’t burn all the world’s coal to get an eventual rise in temperature of 4 C or even more. But *Global Warming in the Pipeline* shows that we don’t need to burn all our coal to get a 4 C rise in climate or hotter.

The paper makes two vital arguments undergirded by one striking empirical observation. The first argument is that Earth’s climate is much more sensitive to humanity’s carbon-dioxide emissions than conventionally estimated. Taking into account feedbacks involving clouds, water vapour, snow cover and sea ice, “equilibrium climate sensitivity” – the eventual warming produced by a doubling of CO₂ in the atmosphere – is likely around 4.8 C, rather than the IPCC’s best estimate of 3 C.

Greater climate sensitivity means that far more warming is “in the pipeline” than conventional models predict. Indeed, Dr. Hansen and his colleagues estimate that the atmosphere’s current concentrations of greenhouse gases are already producing a radiative effect (what scientists call “forcing”) equivalent to a doubling of CO₂ and that this effect, if not reduced, could read-

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ily double or triple the 1.2 C the planet is already experiencing.

The article’s second key argument is that until recently a significant portion of human-caused greenhouse warming has been offset by our aerosol emissions – fine particles in the air that reflect sunlight and cool the planet. This effect is now declining, as key sources of pollution are cleaned up. The authors call aerosol cooling a “Faustian bargain,” because payment in greater global warming is coming due as we reduce pollution from shipping, vehicles, industry and power plants.

Finally, the striking empirical observation is that Earth’s energy imbalance (EEI) has recently soared. This imbalance arises as our planet receives more energy from the sun than it radiates as heat back to space, because our greenhouse gases are trapping

heat in the atmosphere. The authors estimate that between 2005 and 2015, EEI averaged about 0.7 watts per square metre across Earth’s surface. From early 2020 to the middle of this year, they argue, it reached 1.36 watts per square metre, likely in part because lower aerosol emissions allowed more solar energy to reach Earth’s surface.

A 1.36-watt imbalance may seem trivial, but when added up across the planet’s entire surface, the total amounts to nearly a million Hiroshima bombs of extra energy injected into Earth’s atmospheric-ocean system – over and over, each and every day. Currently, most of this excess energy is melting the world’s glaciers and ice caps and heating the oceans, but it’s also supercharging the droughts, storms and heat waves now afflicting every corner of our world.

As Earth’s energy imbalance increases by about half a watt each decade, the authors argue, it’s accelerating Earth’s warming – from about 0.18 C per decade between 1970 and 2010 to at least 0.27 C per decade now. In a more recent commentary, Dr. Hansen and his colleagues go on to estimate that the world will at least temporarily cross the 1.5 C ceiling this coming year, in part because of the influence of El Niño, reaching about 1.7 C of warming by 2030 and 2 C “by the late 2030s.”

Now, to be clear, some prominent climate scientists vehemently disagree with Dr. Hansen and his team, especially with their claim that warming is accelerating – Michael Mann at the University of Pennsylvania being one. Ultimately, the dispute will be adjudicated by nature itself, as the warming rate is revealed in coming years.

But betting against Dr. Hansen would seem foolish, even if our

optimism bias inclines us to do so, given his track record and the worldwide evidence of a spiralling climate crisis we’ve seen this past year.

So, it’s worth unpacking the broader implications of the paper. I believe there are four.

First, if Dr. Hansen and his colleagues are correct, warming will melt the world’s great ice sheets in Antarctica and Greenland much faster than the IPCC currently predicts, possibly entailing a rise of multiple metres in sea levels within the expected lifespan of coastal infrastructure being built now – that is, within the next century. Coastal communities should start planning for this change now.

Second, heating this century is likely to overwhelm many nature-based solutions to climate change. Fires and droughts will kill tree plantations intended to absorb carbon, while heating will weaken biological processes that practices such as regenerative agriculture must exploit to sequester carbon in soil.

Third, the most dangerous aspect of the climate problem is the long lag between emissions and full climate response. This lag facilitates denial, delay and delusion, and so increases the likelihood that some countries will ultimately attempt to “geoengineer” the atmosphere under emergency conditions – perhaps by using fleets of large aircraft to dump huge quantities of reflective sulfate particles into the stratosphere – with potentially catastrophic side effects.

Lastly and most fundamentally, if James Hansen and his team are right, humanity’s responses to the climate crisis must be far more radical than currently planned. Incrementalism is now a waste of resources – and of time.